

- (a) whether any new policy guidelines are proposed to allow Stand-Alone Refineries to survive the depressed state of the refinery sector.
- (b) whether it is a fact that adequate supports are not forthcoming from Government to allow such Stand-Alone Refineries to continue their work;
- (c) to what extent would foreign companies benefit if Indian companies close their operations;
- (d) what steps are proposed to ensure that Indian owned refineries in any sector are not unduly penalised by delay in Government coming up with adequate policies to safeguard national interest; and
- (e) the details of the steps proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (e) The Government has been encouraging setting up of new refineries, including stand-alone refineries, to bridge the gap between the supply and demand of petroleum products. The refining sector has been delicensed in June, 1998 to encourage investments in this sector.

Keeping in view the deregulated scenario which is approaching, stand-alone refineries would need strategic alliances with Oil Marketing Companies for marketing their products. The Government have initiated steps in this direction.

#### **Delay in release of Gas Connections to States**

3034. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) to what extent Government have delayed release of adequate gas connections to States where there is demand and marketing infrastructure;
- (b) whether it is a fact that Hindustan Petroleum has adequate infrastructure to give over the counter gas connections in Andhra Pradesh;
- (c) if so, the reasons for not allowing such marketing of LPG in backward and tribal areas;
- (d) what steps are proposed to allow the lead LPG company in Andhra Pradesh to continue its work; and
- (e) the reasons for this delay;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (e) New LPG connections

are released in a phased manner throughout the country depending upon the LPG availability, waiting list, slack available with the distributors and their viability. Government have a plan to release 1 crore LPG (domestic) connections throughout the country to liquidate the waiting list existing with the LPG distributors of Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies as on 1.12.1999, in all the States including Andhra Pradesh, by the end of year 2000. Government have also allowed release of 10 lakh LPG connections in the rural area of Andhra Pradesh under Deepam Scheme. Further, Oil Companies including Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), have been authorised to open extension counters in the rural areas upto 30 kilometers radius to release the new connections in rural and tribal areas in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

#### **Low Ratio of LPG Agencies to Population in Eastern States**

3035. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the States in Eastern Region like Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal stand for below with regard to the ratio of LPG agencies for one lakh population in comparison to all major States;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the special steps Government propose to take to bring these States at par with all India level?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (c) As per the existing policy, the following criteria are adopted for setting up economically viable LPG distributorships in different parts of the country including the States of Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal;

- (i) All urban locations with a population of 10,000 and above by including potential of adjoining villages falling within the radius of 15 Kms.
- (ii) Urban locations having population of 5,000 and above taking into account the potential of adjoining villages falling within 15 Kms radius.
- (iii) Cluster of villages, within 15 Kms radius of nucleus villages having a population of 10,000 and above.
- (iv) Villages within 15 Kms radius around towns having population of 1 lakh and above.